Theatrical – Individual Troupes etc – 1920

A GREAT PLAY AND A GREAT ACTOR.

Down in Macdougal Street, in the heart of Greenwich Village, the Provincetown Players are producing a play which is calling forth columns of notice from the foremost dramatic critics of New York. The play is entitled "The Emperor Jones." The star of the cast, in fact, the whole play is Charles S. Gilpin, a colored actor The rest of the cast is white.

Mr. Gilpin showed himself a finished actor in "Abraham Lincoln," which ran the whole of last season in this city. He created the role of "Custis" when teh play was produced in America. So finished was his acting that, probably, not one person out of a hundred ever knew that the part was being played by a colored man. Most people took it for granted that the actor was a white man darkened up to play the part; and the newspapers never enlightened the people.

In "The Emperor Jones" no such mistake is possible; Mr. Gilpin plays without any wig and with very little "make up". The critics of New York are proclaiming his performance as one of the best ever seen in this city. For example, Mr. Heywood Broun, the dramatic critic on "The Tribune"," in a review, a column in length says:

> The Emperor is played by a Negro actor named Charles S. Gilpin, who gives the most thrilling performance we have seen any place this season. He sustains the succession of scenes in monologue not only because his voice is one of a gorgeous natural quality, but because he knows just what to do with it. All the notes are there and he has also an extraordinary facility for being in the right place at the right time. Generally he seems fairly painted into the scenic design. One performance is not enough to entitle a player to the word great even from a not too careful critic, but there can be no question whatever that in "The Emperor Jones" Gilpin is great. It is a performance of heroic stature. It is so good that the fact that it is enormously skillful seems only incidental.

Mr. Alexander Woolcott, the dramatic critic on "The Times," in a review of equal length says:

> Though this new play of his is so clumsily produced that its presentation consists largely of long, unventilated intermissions interspersed with fragmentary scenes, it weaves a most potent spell, thanks partly to the force and cunning of the author, thanks partly to the admirable playing of Charles S. Gilpin in a title role so predominant that the play is little more than a dramatic monologue. His is an uncommonly powerful and imaginatice performance, in several respects unsurpassed this season in New York. Mr. Gilpin is a Negro.

It should be remembered that Mr. Woolcott, while he is considered one of the greatest dramatic critics in the country, is also a Southerner and does not go into ecstasies over colored artists simply because they are colored. It was he who could see very little in the "Negro Players," who produced the Ridgely Torrence plays several years ago. Mr. Woolcott concluded his review as follows:

> The Provincetown Players have squanderously invested in cushions for their celebrated seats and a concrete dome to catch and dissolve their lights, so that even on their little stage they can now get such illusions of distance and the wide outdoors as few of their uptown rivals can achieve. But of immeasurably greater importance in their present enterprise, they have acquired an actor, one who has it in him to invoke the pity and the terror and the indescribable foreboding which are part of the secret of "The Emperor Jones."

When we heard that Mr. Gilpin was coming out of the cast of "Abraham Lincoln" we regretted it. "The Emperor Jones" however has given him the opportunity to show that he can play not only a minor part but sustain an entire play. He is proving himself to be a great actor, and he is also demonstrating to the New York public and theatrical managers those artistic powers of the Negro which will some day be generally recognized.

Inconsistencies of Race Prejudice Are Pointed Out in "Justice"

The New York Age 11/13/20

There is no question as to "Justice," played by the Bramhall Players at the Lafayette Theatre last week, and the attraction at the Putnam Theatre, Brooklyn, this week, being one of the strongest race plays ever written. It paints a true and graphic picture of the unfair treatment accorded Negroes in the South and in a subtle manner directs attention to the curious inconsistencies existing in this country on the question of race relationship.

Although both races are very familiar with conditions wrought by colorphobia, the play has been written more with a view to making the white American stop, think and reflect, and with the hope that he will change his attitude toward the colored American.

During the first two days of the engagement of "Justice" at the Lafayette Theatre, the performance was somewhat marred by the failure of Miss Helen Link, the leading lady, to speak loud enough for many in the audience to hear her. This defect probably was due to the actress formerly appearing in such smaller theatres as the Bramhall Playhouse. It can be said to Miss Link's credit that she appeared to better advantage later on.

Miss Rose McClendon, as "Miranda Wright," favorably impressed with her work. Others in the cast to help make the play an artistic success were Stanley Green, F. H. Wilson, Robert Babcock, Paul Hayes, Joseph Goldberg, Robert Jackson, Webster Elkins, Frederick J. Buse, Annyce Francis, Dorsha, Joseph DeMier, Charles Randolph, Bina Flynn, Mildred Maloney, Al Dexter, Mrs. Malony, Jeanette Porter, James Bell and Miss Lindberg.

The novelty of a cast, composed of colored and white artists, and the presentation of a play dealing with Negro problem, drew large audiences to the Lafayette last week.

L. A. W.

Jackson Writing for Billboard.

The Billboard, generally regarded as the largest publication in America devoted to amusements, has inaugurated a new department in the interest of the Negro actor, actress, artist and musician. The department will be conducted by James Albert Jackson, a versatile writer, whose interesting articles on race subjects have appeared in white publications from time to time.

NEW YORK CITY TELEGRAPH
JUNE 15, 1920

NEGRO ACTORS AT BRIGHTON.

Colored Cast Presents "The Man Who Owns Broadway."

Brighton Beach Music Hall has a most unique attraction this week. George M. Cohan's musical hit, "The Man Who Owns Broadway," with an entire negro company. Heretofore, negro actors have only been accepted in vaudeville in individual acts.

It is news to most of the theatregoers in New York that only a few blocks from Broadway a theatre entirely devoted to negro art exists. These artists have played every big success that Broadway has seen, whether dramatic or musical, plus four grand operas during each season.

NEW YORK CITY TELEGRAPH
APRIL 2, 1920

Tarkington Baker Annoucnes That Colored Comedian Will Make Series of Screen Plays.

"LA, LA, LUCILLE" RIGHTS SOLD

Universal to Turn Farce Into Vehicle for Eddie Lyon and Lee Moran.

By LOUELLA O. PARSONS.

ONE by one those Tarkington Baker announcements come to light. Last week the way was paved for future plans with the story that Booth Tarkington had been engaged to write original stories for the screen, and yesterday by a little Sherlock Holmes deduction we learned the name of Mr. Baker's first star. Now prepare, gentle readers, for a surprise. Tarkington Baker, the gentleman from Indiana, and a recent addition to the film producers, has signed Bert Williams to make a series of two-reel comedies. Mr. Williams, Mr. Baker promises, is to be starred at the head of his own company and is to have all the appurtenances of stardom.

Bert Williams, for many seasons one of the big features of the "Zeigfeld Follies," is going to bring his noted delineation of a negro character to the screen. The first of these pictures will be made on the Coast. Next season, when the comedian appears on Broadway at the head of his own stage production, the film company will continue its operations in New York.

And these aren't all of the ambitious Mr. Baker's plans. He has several trump cards up his sleeve to be played a little later. Among them are two writers of reputation, one engaged to write plays for Bert Williams and the other to furnish exclusive screen material for the Baker productions. Guessing is bad form, but we have an idea the Williams writer is one of the short story writers who specializes in negro tales. Mr. Williams will be the first comedian to star in negro pictures.

N. Y. C. JOURNAL
DECEMBER 31, 1920

Owing to the success of The Provincetown Players in "The Emperor Jones" at the Selwyn Theatre, Adolph Klauber has decided to continue the matinees which will be given again next week on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Charles Gilpin, the negro actor, and the same cast who appeared in "The Emperor Jones" originally, will continue.

Mrs. Edna Lewis Thomas, Well-Known Socially, Joins Lafayette Players

TWO seasons ago a benefit performance was given at the Lafayette Theatre by well-known colored men and women of New York not actively identified with the stage, who gave a creditable presentation of "Pride of Race." One of the artistic hits of the evening was registered by Mrs. Edna Lewis Thomas, who so favorably impressed several managers that they made her flattering inducements to go on the stage.

All these offers to appear before the footlights were turned down by Mrs. Thomas and it was not until the word went out a short time ago that the Quality Amusement Corporation was exclusively under colored management that she began to look with favor on the idea of following a stage career.

Mrs. EDNA LEWIS THOMAS.

No little interest has been created in the report that Mrs Thomas has joined the ranks of the theatrical profession and soon will be seen as a member of the Lafayette Players. Mrs. Thomas, who was formerly Miss Edna Lewis, is well known socially in New York, Boston and other cities. She has won several prizes in beauty contests, and is regarded as one of the race's most beautiful women.

Mrs. Thomas will make her debut not on the stage at the Putnam Theatre, Brooklyn, week of November 8, and will be seen in the dramatic playlet, "Confidence," written by the colored author, F. H. Wilson.

"Confidence" is a playlet dealing with negro life, and its presentation marks the first step of the Quality Amusement Corporation to give colored theatregoers throughout the country distinctive racial plays by race authors

To Sue Company for Altering Race Film

By LESTER A. WALTON.

SUIT for $50,000 damages is to be instituted in the courts of Los Angeles, Calif., by a motion picture firm composed of colored promoters, against the L-Ko Comedy Company, having offices both in Los Angeles and New York. The colored concern will charge that after naming the L-Ko people agents for a race photo play formerly entitled "Injustice" the latter made such radical and unpopular changes in the picture that colored managers throughout the East in particular refused to book it.

The usual attempt of the white man to shape everything dealing with the race question according to his prejudiced notions is the chief cause of what promises to be a very interesting legal controversy. Another phase of the case to invite more than passing attention is that the picture was altered by Jews. It is quite often the case that while they take every advantage to put their race in a favorable light before the world, on the other hand they do not hesitate to present the Negro in a ridiculous and inconsistent rôle.

Last fall I was approached by representatives of the L-Ko Comedy Company, who consulted me relative to permitting a private exhibition of the picture at the Lafayette Theatre. Arrangements were made accordingly and on the occasion in question the audience was composed of representatives of the colored press and myself.

Some of the criticisms directed against the photoplay after its private presentation were: That it failed to inspire race pride; that the spectacle of a college graduate falling desperately in love with a girl obviously lacking in education and using "dis" and "dat" was incongruous; that the attempt to show that there was no color prejudice in the American Red Cross and it was an easy matter for colored nurses to go abroad at the instance of the Government was misleading and a misstatement of facts.

It seems that other race newspaper men and managers subsequently expressed similar views about the picture, and the L-Ko representatives experienced much difficulty in booking it throughout the East and Middle West. Results so dissatisfied the producers that Sidney P. Dones, who plays the principal part in the film, was sent East to make a careful investigation and determine why the picture was not winning more favorable consideration.

When Mr. Dones came to New York he found that the original title had been changed from "Injustice"; that instead of seven reels the picture had been cut to five and that Negro dialect and many other objectionable features had been added and many scenes and lines calculated to put the Negro in a favorable light had been eliminated. He only had to see the picture once to know why it was not in big demand.

Upon upbraiding the L-Ko people for changing the photo play and making it highly objectionable to hundreds of colored people the only reason advanced for committing this error was that it had been done in order to properly put it on the market by white agents, who evidently proceeded on the theory that colored Americans much prefer to see the race as it is not rather than as it really is.

There was a song written some years ago entitled, "Get That Idea Out of Your Head." It is respectfully referred to white Americans who continue to look upon the Negro of to-day out of the same eyes as they did years ago.

Theatrical - Individual Troupes - 1920.

GREAT CROWDS WITNESS NEW ATTUCKS THEATRE OPENING MONDAY NIGHT

Every Available Seat Taken and Hundreds Turned Away Monday Night.—President Russell Makes Opening Address.

(*By* J. M. HARRISON)

As scheduled, the new Attucks Theatre, erected by the Twin City Amuement Corporation, opened Monday night of this week, and long before the opening hour great crowds were thronged on both sides of the street in front of the house seeking admission. When the curtain was raised on the first act of "It Happened In Harlem," the bright and sparkling musical comedy, staged by the LaFayette Players of New York, every available seat in the house was filled and every inch of standing room taken. The event was one of the most inspiring in the history of colored Norfolk and enthusiasm ran wild as the anxious audience waited the beginning of the performance. From the moment that the applause to the opening score by the orchestra echoed, an audience which showed by continued bursts of applause, that they enjoyed the first real pretentious show staged by a colored company in a colored theatre in this city. It was a night of felicitation for the colored citizens who gave unstinted support to the promoters of the enterprise.

During the intermission between acts Manager Cross introduced Mr. Frank G. Russell, president of the Twi nCity Amusement Corporation, who made an eloquent address, in which he referred to the organization and promotion of the Twin City Amusement Corperation, the outcome of which was the building of "the Attucks." Mr. Russell said:

"Looking backward over the sweep of eighteen months, I recall with burning memories, the first meeting of that anxious, enthusiastic, and intrepid "Fifteen," in the office of the Guide Publishing Company, consisting of Messrs. P. B. Young, J. T. Tanner, E. J. Puryear, Dr. G. Hamilton Francis, H. C. Young, Levi C. Brown, L. A. Howell, W. W. Foreman, W. T. Faison, Thos. W. Newbie, J. S. Jones, F. E. Puryear, Dr. E. D. Burke and your humble servant. In that building during the month of March, 1919, was conceived and delivered the embryo of the Twin City Amusement Corporation, whose dream now looms before us in the form of this majestic and impressive structure. These men are the originators, the promulgators, the organizers, and promoters. Scourged by the lash of injustice, writhing with anguish and indignation because of the humiliating and satanic laws of jim-crowism, segregation and ostracism, mindful of the imperative need of a modern, sanitary and well equipped theatre and office building, realizing the moral, material, physical, mental, and spiritual benefits that lay hidden in such a project, this advanced guard gradually augmented, while forging ahead, by a force of one thousand stockholders, looked beyond the horizon, with footsteps turned toward the great unknown, discouraged by no privations, held back by no fears, they opened the road to a greater heritage which the Negro race may share.

"Several rumors have been circulated with the aim and purpose of defeating or embarrassing us in our plans. One report was, that because of mis-appropriation and bad management our funds were exhausted, that the theatre was being constructed only for the dicties, that the big fish would devour the little fish, in other words, that the promoters would fleece or rob the stockholders, that certain white theatrical men of the city are in control, and as recently as last Thursday it was rumored that our plant is owned by our eminent friend in Philadelphia, by whose presence we are honored tonight. As president, and having presided over, with but few exceptions, all of the deliberations and proceedings, I can say without faltering, that such statements are absolutely unfounded and are false and malicious to the superlative degree.

"I am gratified to remind you that this plant was not only conceived by members of our group, but it was planned and supervised by a colored architect, constructed by colored laborers and mechanics, and financed by colored people.

"On this memorable occasion, dear friends, it is my cherished privilege to extend you the unique opportunity of demonstrating your desire and your determination to emancipate yourselves from the jimcrow theatres of Tidewater. On behalf of the members, I want to thank you for your splendid and generous support, without which we cannot hope to succeed. I want to felicitate you for the noble manner in which you have responded to our call and wishes tonight. I also most respectfully dedicate and present to you in the name of freedom and justice, for the cause of those who are still sleeping in the womb of unborn generations, and as a most pronounced and emphatic protest against the disgrace of proscription this magnificent and inspiring monument, the 'Attucks Theater,' whose very name is symbolic of, and implies heroism, courage, sacrifice and liberty

"Time will not permit me to further intrude, therefore in conclusion, I want to commend the Executive Committee. the Board of Directors as well as the members and friends for the loyal and unselfish support which they have so cheerfully rendered. Because of Divine guidance and your racial fidelity you have reared on high the bough of promise of a new day of commercial and industrial activity. You have shown that elevation, success, and honor be not in rising upon the graves of your fellow men, impeding their progress or in rejoicing at their misfortunes, but in the spirit which tells us that we move if at all, together, that when one suffers all suffer, when one succeeds and is honored all rise in and through him. You have shown that when this personal responsibility becomes prevalent, when men who are prepared, when men who have definite purposes, are willing to labor to the uttermost for the accomplishment of these aims, every avenue to success will be opened, and every agency will conspire to beckon them onward.

"May I bid you God-speed and when you shall have fulfilled the command of destiny, may the blessings of your precepts and examples shine forth with such an effulgence, that as an illustrious speaker once said, "You will need neither the sculptor nor the architect to perpetuate your memory; no princely dome, no monumental pile, no stately pyramid, whose towering height shall pierce the stormy clouds, and rear its lofty head to Heaven, to tell posterity your fame.' But may your deeds, your worthy deeds alone, render you immortal. When oblivion shall have swept away thrones, kingdoms and principalities, when every vestige of human greatness, and grandeur and glory shall have mouldered in the dust, and the last period of time become extinct—may eternity itself catch the glowing theme and dwell with increasing rapture on your name."

As he ended his remarks the audience voiced its approval through vociferous applause. Mr. E. C. Brown, president of the Quality Amusement Corporation, which controls the LaFayette Players, was then introduced to the audience, and, in a short address expressed his delight with the theatre and the audience and his pleasure at being present. Speaking for the Quality Company, he gave his assurance that the productions presented by the LaFayette Players at the Attucks would be of the highest standard and that there would not at any time be any feature presented that would mar the pleasure or feelings of the most fastidious. Mr. Brown was heartily applauded and the curtain went up on the next act.

The show was delightfully pleasing from every angle. Dink Stewart, as Augustus Shaver, the African Prince, was simply a riot, and repeated his success in Philadelphia and New York of "Baby Blues." The company was well balanced, and the star was ably assisted by Andrew Tribble as Mrs. Street, a widow; J. Frances Mores, as the rich hog-raiser from Kansas. The songs rendered by Mr. Diggs were enthusiastically received, and he was compelled to respond to several encores. The show was a hit, a bevy of pretty girls in pretty costumes added to the beauty of the occasion. The entire cast rendered a bill that for refined work has not been duplicated in Norfolk. Next week, the melodrama, "The Crimson Alibi," is to have a week's run, and the colored theatregoers of Norfolk are in store for genuine comedy and dramatic treats the year round, at their own beautiful playhouse. The promoters, stockholders and citizens generally are to be congratulated for their emancipation from racial discrimination which created the dream which has been realized into a tangible realization, by the opening of the Attucks.

Theatrical - Individual Troupes, etc. - 1920

General Manager E. C. Brown of Quality Amusement Corporation Makes Announcement That Will Be Received With Joy by the Entire Amusement World and Which Shows Steady Progress of the Company

2-15-20

Putnam Theatre in Brooklyn Taken Over and Will Be Thoroughly Renovated — New House Planned for Baltimore That Will Rival the Dunbar in Philadelphia — Outlook Points to a Great Future for the Corporation

Announcements are coming thick and fast of the activities of the Quality Amusement Corporation, of which E. C. Brown, the energetic Philadelphia banker who some months ago took over the widely known amusement corporation which included the Lafayette Theater on Seventh Ave., is general manager. A bit of news that will be received with joy by both performers and the better class of people in Brooklyn is the taking over of the Putnam Theater on Fulton St., Brooklyn, right in the most centrally located spot for a house of its kind. This house will come into the hands of the Quality people on March 1 and will be closed for about a month. During this time workmen will thoroughly renovate the place and when the doors are again thrown open to the public a theater measuring up in every way to the tastes of the dwellers across the bridge will be the result. General Manager Brown will send his best plays to Brooklyn and we feel safe in predicting that if the same high standard of general management is placed in the Putnam as the Lafayette, the better class of people will feel it a duty to support the Putnam. Another announcement fraught with good tidings for those who earn a living directly and indirectly through the company of which Mr. Brown is the head, is to the effect that a theater rivalling the beautiful Dunbar which was recently opened in Philadelphia will be built in Baltimore. Mr. Brown deserves full credit for in the short time that he has had control of the Lafayette Players he has been steadily adding new theaters to the circuit in which will be housed first class colored attractions.

"THE RETURN OF EVE."

That those responsible for the selection of plays at the Lafayette Theater are fully alive to what is demanded by the patrons of this palatial house is seen in "The Return of Eve," one of the best dramatic offerings we have ever had the pleasure of witnessing. Harlem laughed its fill during the past two weeks and saw Alex Rogers' "This and That" depart with regret. However, the Quality people have brought us a snow which should play to splendid houses during the week. With "The Return of Eve" comes the return of Mrs. Chas. H. Anderson, and if ever a performer got off to a wonderful start it is Mrs. Anderson. This lady has injected into the character of Eve a sincerity and certain abandon which will bring her volumes of applause, and it would not be out of place to state that her return is made under auspices that should give us an opportunity of enjoying the best she has in her. Then, too, she is surrounded by a company of players who to the last one can contribute a wonderful share towards the success of almost any play selected by the Quality people. In this week's production Sidney Kirkpatrick, Laura Bowman, "Babe" Townsend, delightful Susie Sutton, the improved Alice Gorgas, Minnie Washington, Lawrence Chenault, Barrington Carter and Minnie Brown are all working as a perfect unit and giving as fine an interpretation of drama as we have seen. The scenery borders on the gorgeous and the music is most appropriate.

BUSTER IS DEAD
Last Defender

Buster McDonald, for many years recognized as one of the Race's best comedians, died in Kansas City, Mo., at the home of his parents, 937 Bell street, on March 7, after a long illness. Aside from his father and mother, the deceased is survived by two sisters and two brothers and a legion of other relatives and friends all over the country.

3-27-20

Buster McDonald

Buster McDonald was born in Omaha, Neb., in 1889, and started his theatrical career at the age of 12. He was with many road shows and a few vaudeville acts and made a fine name for himself. His last work was a three-year tour over the big time—U. B. O. and Orpheum circuits—with Valyda & Brazilian Nuts, the other members of the act being the famous Valyda and her husband, Norma Thomas, the talented straight man and pianist. He was forced to retire some months ago on account of sickness, and reports coming from his home from time to time gave indications that the end might occur at any time. The burial took place at Kansas City on March 9.

SHOWS PROGRESS OF COLORED RACE

"The Open Door," a Pageant Taking Negro From Savagery to Civilization.

BROOKLYN STAND'D UNION
DECEMBER 16, 1920

RECEIVED WELL IN BOSTON

Remarkable Production Creation of Alice Holdship Ware.

(Special to The Standard Union.)

BOSTON, Dec. 16.—National importance attaches to the pageant of "The Open Door," which had its second Boston production in Symphony Hall the other night. So successful has been its production in Atlanta, Savannah and Boston that it is likely it will have a run in other cities. On its own merits it is a dramatic, vivid and absorbing representation of the progress of the negro race from savagery to civilization. But, in addition to that, it has in itself nothing short of a force of great national value for the uplift of the negro race and for the stimulus of appreciation on the part of the whites, so that misunderstandings will be removed, sympathy increased, education advanced and citizenship purified. Such demonstration has been made already of its power in this respect that it is reasonable to predict equal recognition when it is produced in other cities.

In its genesis the pageant is a creation of Alice Holdship Ware, wife of President Edward T. Ware, of Atlanta University, who has been for months in a sanitarium in Loomis, in the Catskills, successfully fighting, as it seems, an attack of tuberculosis and for a time compelled to give up his duties in Atlanta. Mrs. Ware wrote the pageant for the pupils of Atlanta University for local production and nothing more. So marked was its excellence that it won high praise from the Atlanta "Constitution," the principal white newspaper of that part of the country. This mention attracted attention in Savannah and the pageant was produced there. It was also repeated in Atlanta. It atraced the interested observation of P. P. Claxton, the United States Commissioner of Education, who sees in it a means of arousing ambition and of producing great results in the negro race all over the United States. Success in the South led to the reproduction in Boston, where the traditions of anti-slavery days survive with power and where honor and prestige still attach to the names of William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips.

The first production was given Nov. 16 with a remarkable result. Color lines and prejudices disappeared. Boston and Cambridge people of high social and educational position, including President-emeritus Charles W. Eliot of Harvard; Bliss Perry, ex-editor of the Atlantic Monthly, their wives and other professors and wives, and numerous other people were in the long list of patrons of the pageant. It is produced under the personal management of Miss Gertrude Ware, sister of President Ware, who was given leave of absence in order to make sure that the performance is worthy of its purpose, and equal to the abilities of its performers. Atlanta talent is not brought North for these local productions, but the negroes of the city where the pageant is given are the actors. Hence there is involved a long time of selection and dri" Much must be done to train the characters which are represented and to secure adequate publicity. But the reaction by the negroes to this stimulus to their ambition and to their intellectual capacity has been wonderful and there is no doubt that many persons will get an impetus from the pageant which will last through their lives.

On the printed programme is a statement which shows how the race is advancing by leaps and bounds: "Through such wide open doors have passed hundreds of men and women, teachers and leaders of their people in America, from poverty to 600,000 homes, 200 lines of business, 45,000 businesses, with $50,000,000 invested in them; 70 sound banks, $21,500,000 in property used for higher education, $76,000,000 in church property, 20,000,000 acres of land, 12,000,000 people worth $1,115,000,000 and illiteracy reduced to 25 per cent."

Before the pageant begins there is some wonderful singing of "spirituals" by the great chorus of men and women on the stage. These have the peculiarities of the plantation songs which were made familiar to the people of the North by the famous "Jubilee Singers" of Fiske University. They are, in the main, religious songs and the work of both solo singers and of chorus is thrilling. "My Lord! What a Morning," "Oh, Rocks, Don't Fall on Me," "'Tis Me, O Lord," "And He Never Said a Mumlin Word," and "All My Sins Been Taken Away," indicate the character of this preliminary of the pageant.

For the pageant itself, the stage is set with a high throne in the background with a canopy of barbaric splendor above on the wall. Here sits King Ignorance in state. He receives the homage, the prostrations and the presents of his slaves, who perform their dances before him in much finery of savage costume, with abundance of gesticulation and spirited action. The meaning of the several scenes is announced in advance to the audience by History, who stands at a corner of the stage. Greed is one of the characters, whose stinging lash drives the slaves to throw themselves before the throne of Ignorance. Hate is also prominent, with her son, Prejudice.

Then comes the entrance, after a supposed reign of Ignorance for many years, of Education. She is beautifully arrayed, with queenly bearing and winning face, appealing to all that is noble and pure in the subjects of Ignorance. That monarch himself feels the irresistible might of his mortal foe. He slinks like a beaten coward from his high throne and disappears. Greed, Hate and Prejudice follow him into oblivion. But Education does not win a complete victory at first. She is opposed by Indolence, Foolish Smattering and Gay Philander, each of whom conquers some victims among the former slaves of Ignorance. Then the scene again changes. Their fear of Ignorance and his brutal might removed, Truth, Beauty and Love come forward with their bright faces and with their appeal to all to take their stand with Education and to enter "The Open Door." Thus the triumph of these uplifting forces is made the culmination of the pageant. Headed by queenly Education, the entire negro race, as the symbolism would represent it, passes up through the open door to the higher ground of civil and religious liberty amid the loyal support of all followers, inspired by the attainments already made and by the prophetic promise of still greater to be achieved in the future. All of the environment of ancient savagery has been changed. All the degrading surroundings have been overcome. Appeal is made to the best and the noblest in every colored person and there is a direct personal response on the part of the actors which makes their pageant far more than an imitation, for it seems to be a real consecration by each participant to a lofty ideal.

One of the evident effects of this pageant has been its appeal to race pride. There is no aping of whites, but there is a revelation of the capacity which is in the negro race of itself, though it is helped by whites' assistance. Every character is taken by a person of negro blood and there is not a white person connected with the performance, with the exception of Miss Gertrude Ware. These singers, dancers and actors feel their representative character as specimens of the black race. It is not alone each one by himself who is acting, but it is a typical negro. Hence, so it is evidently in mind, each actor must throw all possible animation and imagination into action and so represent worthily the symbolic character impersonated. This spirit of personal and race responsibility raises the entire pageant to a high level of dramatic action. Men and women, boys and girls throw all their vigor and intelligence into their singing, action and expression, so that the entire performance stands unique in the season's productions on any stage in the United States.

Not least in its consequences is the reaction upon the audience as well as upon the actors themselves. Negroes and whites were mixed in about equal numbers through the great hall. They were thoroughly mingled in their sittings. No segregation or exclusive sittings could be attempted, but black and white were elbow neighbors all over the hall. In dress, courtliness of bearing, manners, appreciation of the music and the acting and in the details which make up the ensemble of well-bred men and women, the races seemed to be on an equality. From this point

of view, therefore, as truly as from its peculiar appeal to race pride of negroes all over the country, this pageant takes position as a phenomenal creation which is presumably destined to have a wide run in many cities, always presented by local talent, and full of stimulus for the blacks, with its moving appeal to the whites, for their sympathy, appreciation and encouragement.

Artists Wanted for the Tuskegee Concert Company

Birmingham, Ala.—The promoters of the Tuskegee Concert Company have set themselves a task which if accomplished should prove a most worthy undertaking. It is the intention of the company to organize a coterie of artists unsurpassed in their respective lines, whether vocal or instrumental.

Any person of ability, professional or amateur, will be given consideration as only a few students of the Institute will be with the organization. It is the desire of the promoters to assemble the best singers and musicians who desire to assist in the uplift and promotion and betterment of rare and phenomenal colored talent.

It is not necessary for any one possessing real talent to have had professional experience to become a member of the Tuskegee Concert Company. An advertisement appearing elsewhere in this issue gives some information in regard to the kind of talent desired. Those wishing further information for themselves or some friend who has ability can get same by writing to the address given in the advertisement.

Canary Cottage

(A Dramatic Opinion.)

By HUBERT H. HARRISON.

It is more than two years since I turned my back on the business of dramatic criticism, and, besides, when a person saunters into a theatre and pays down his money for a seat he is entitled to the luxury of enjoying himself—if he can—and of making cynical remarks if he can't. It is not to be expected that he will resurrect the buried tools of an old trade and throw in gratis a half column of kindly appreciation. But the musical comedy billed at the Lafayette last week under the somewhat meaningless title of "Canary Cottage" was a piece of such commanding excellence that it sheerly lifted me out of my seat. Honor to whom honor is due; and I take off my hat to this marvel of melody and stagecraft in which the Quality Amusement people present Shelton Brooks and his associate players.

I have been watching musical comedy at the Lafayette Theatre since it was first built. I have seen and enjoyed in verying degrees the Darktown Follies, the Smart Set and the Smarter Set, Darkydom Broadway Rastus from 1915 to date, and the other Negro "musical comedies." I have also critically observed their presentations of Broadway musical comedies from the days of "Madame Sherry."

But not one of these "shows" has ever come within hailing distance of "Canary Cottage." It outshines them all in cleverness, with which it fairly ripples. It has something to which none of them except the recent "Bamboula" ever made any pretense, namely, melodic consistency. Its chorus is in a class by itself for form, dancing dress and efficient team-work. And, over and above all, it really presents a plot. The essence of this plot (narrow as it is in range of ideas), is cleverness. Perhaps it is, in that respect, too highly sophisticated. Yet the steps of its development were quite clever to the audience which was convulsed by the increasing humor of its situations and dialogue.

"Broadway Rastus" rose to the level of theatrical dignity only in the able acting of one person, Emmett Anthony; "Bamboula" lacked able actors, but "Canary Cottage" was built by Mr. Morosco as firmly and consistently as a drama. It therefore makes considerable demands on the dramatic abilities of the cast, and, as a result, every part was acted as it should be. Perhaps there were but few gleams of great genius, but there was good acting everywhere—and this is unusual in a musical comedy in Harlem. The only observable defect seems to be in the enunciation of most of those who had speaking parts. Their words were often unintelligible in the first balcony. But this could have been due to the defective acoustics of the Lafayette Theatre.

The musical numbers were excellently rendered by the chorus and orchestra, and Mr. Shelton Brooks' turn at the piano in the second act was highly diverting on account of his harmonic "stunts."

The chorus deserves a paragraph by itself. So many of the choruses recently seen at the Lafayette seem to have had their clothes thrown at them; this chorus is clothed and costumed as if someone had paid real money to a costumer for the things that they wore. They were perfect in every detail. And as to dancing. The girls of "Canary Cottage" know what dancing is. They danced, not as if the stage manager was holding a whip over them. They danced as if they enjoyed it. There was music in the simplest movement of their legs. (And those extremities were very well selected for their work.) They were good to look at—exceedingly good—and they worked for the honor of their company.

Altogether, this musical comedy is the best yet. It pleases without dirt and tickles without the usual contemptible "niggerisms" which so many of our actors insistently obtrude even into a Broadway show. If the name of the piece could be changed to one with more meaning it should run a long and pleasant run at the various theatres on the Q. A. C. circuit.

PENDLETON ORE ORREGONIAN
DECEMBER 18, 1920

MINSTREL IS SUCCESS.

The negro minstrel show, given last night at the Presbyterian church under the auspices of the Men's Forum, was pronounced a success by those who attended. The program consisted of two songs by the minstrels, "Old Kentucky Home" and "Old Black Joe," solo, John Penland; solo, "Caroline," by Mr. Sprague; coon song, Mr. Lemert; pantomimic solo, with phonographic accompaniment, by Mr. Benson and a piano solo by Frank Garsch. The black faces were responsible for numerous jokes. Rev. G. L. Clarke acted as interlocutor and Clyde Phillips, Dr. David B. Hill, Rev. J. M. Cornelison and A. M. Chrystal as end men. Cider and doughnuts were served by the minstrels after the show, tin cups and pitchers being used for the drink while coal buckets and fire shovels were used in the serving of doughnuts.

N Y C DRAMATIC MIRROR
MAY 22. 1920

Colored Actors Get Charter

The Colored Actors and Performers' Association of New York City has been granted a charter by the Secretary of State.

It is a membership corporation and has been formed for the purpose of providing a clubhouse for the benefit of actors, musicians and theatrical performers, and to promote the mutual interest and development of its members.

N Y C DRAMATIC MIRROR
JUNE 19. 1920

Colored Ca[illegible]esents "The Man Who [illegible]s Broadway"

Brighton Beach Music Hall has a unique attraction this week. George M. Cohan's musical hit, "The Man Who Owns Broadway," with an entire negro company. Heretofore, negro actors have only been accepted in vaudeville in individual acts.

It is news to most of the theatergoers in New York that only a few blocks from Broadway a theater entirely devoted to negro art exists. These artists have played every big success that Broadway has seen, whether dramatic or musical, plus four grand operas during each season.

New Theater Opens

Oklahoma City, Okla., Feb. 27.—The new Aldridge theater opened its doors last week and 12,000 people attended. Short talks were made by Dr. A. W. Brown and Editor Roscoe Dunjee and Manager Thomas Pierson. The editor opposed bitterly those who attended theaters here and were "Jim-Crowed."

The Colored Players Billed In "Simon, the Cyrenian"

By MORGAN

In an effort to stimulate a growing movement for better and more artistic Negro drama and to bring to the more discriminating Negro theatre-goer relief from the cheap melodrama and the cheaper musical comedy that have held the Negro stage for so many years, the Colored Players' Guild of New York City, under the direction of Dora Cole Norman, presented at the Harlem Y. W. C. A. on June eleventh and twelfth Ridgeley Torrence's one-act play, "Simon the Cyrenian."

That the number of passably good Negro dramas is pathetically small, and that as yet the race has found no playwright that can faithfully interpret Negro life without idealizing or caricaturing it, was indicated by the fact, that for want of a better play, the Guild was forced to present such an inadequate and unconvincing drama as "Simon the Cyrenian."

The excellent acting, directing and producing abilities of the Guild were worthy a far better constructed vehicle. To begin with, Mr. Torrence's play gave evidence of being hurried, of not having been thoroughly developed. In the short span of twenty-five minutes the author attempted to reveal the waverings of the African, *Simon*, between his warlike pledge to free Africa and his newly acquired faith in Christ's principle of non-resistance. The theme is big and requires considerable motivation and development to make the outcome convincing. But Mr. Torrence worked up his climaxes too abruptly, characterized inadequately and forced his conclusion without sufficient preparation.

In addition to this, Mr. Torrence introduced into his play one of the most hackneyed contrivances in stage-craft. He brought Christ into his play, not, fortunately on the scene, but through a Voice, off stage. It is a weak dramatist who depends upon the supernatural to aid his dramatic action. It has become especially bad taste to have Christ in any way throw the influence of His spirit on any one side in a dramatic struggle. And it has become even worse taste to obtain sympathy for a character by comparing him with Christ, particularly in the extreme way Mr. Torrence did it, for *Simon* in the play, wears a crown of thorns and bears a cross.

The acting, however, overshadowed the shortcomings of the play. Mr. Robeson, as *Simon* interpreted his role sincerely and powerfully. Mrs. MaBelle White Williams, as *Procula*, played impressively the emotional and sensitive wife of Pilate, and Miss Vashti Maxwell as *Acte of Egypt*, strove bravely for Africa.

With such acting, directing and producing powers as the Colored Players revealed in "Simon the Cyrenian," the future of Negro drama in New York looks very promising, provided good plays are available.

The following was the cast:

CHARACTERS.
(In order of appearance.)

Procula, the wife of Pilate, MaBelle White Williams
Attendants to Procula, Alice Coffer, Anice Cotton
Messenger.....Edwin Morgan
Drusus.....Francis Turner
Acte, princess of Egypt.....Vashti Maxwell
Attendants to Acte, Dorothy Hendrickson, Olive Falmetta
Battus, a Libyan prince, a boy, Charles Randolph
Simon.....Paul Robeson
Pilate governor of Judea.....Harry Delaney
Barabbas, an insurrectionist....Frank Wilson
The Mocker with the Scourge.Francis Turner
The Mocker with the Scarlet Robe, Edwin Morgan
The Mocker with the Crown of Thorns, Lloyd Atchinson
Centurion.....Appleton Manson
Longinus.....Garfield Tarrant
The Voice.....Charles Burroughs

Scene: A garden of Pilate's house.
Foreword by Dorothy Hendrikson.
Costumes by Alice Coffer.
Scenery by Marcellus H. Hawkins.

BERT WILLIAMS IN NEW SHOW NOW

Bert Williams, the world-famous comedian, having completed his engagement with Ziegfeld's "Follies," has just signed a contract to appear in George LeMaire's "Broadway Brevities of 1920." In the "Brevities" Williams will be given much more latitude in the matter of using original comedy than he was allowed in the "Follies." Williams' appearance in Chicago will be looked forward to with great interest when the "Brevities" comes to the Loop.

THE NEW LINCOLN THEATRE.

The new Lincoln theatre just being completed at 18th street and Lydia avenue can be described in three words: beautiful, exquisite and grand and to be appreciated it must be seen.

This theatre will open Sunday afternoon February 22nd at 2:00 o'clock and is the most elegant of its kind in the west, having a seating capacity of more than fifteen hundred and costing $125,000.00. The Negroes of greater Kansas City should show their appreciation to the management for this large expenditure for their amusement by taxing the capacity of this theatre every night. The Lincoln orchestra composed of Colored artists will furnish the musical program.

Theatrical—Individual Troupes, etc. 1920.

ALEXANDER WALCOTT WRITING IN N. Y. TIMES LAUDS NEGRO ACTOR

mer Local Star Gaining New Fame and Finish With Provincetown Players

(Courtesy N. Y. Times.)

THE NEW O'NEILL PLAY.

The Provincetown Players began their new season in Macdougal Street last week with the impetus of a new play by the as yet unbridled Eugene O'Neill, an extraordinarily striking and dramatic study of panic fear which is called "The Emperor Jones." It reinforces the impression that for strength and originality he has no ival among the American writers for e stage. Though this new play of s is so clumsily produced that its resentation consists largely of long, unventiiated intermissions interspersed with fragmentary scenes, it weaves a most potent spell, thanks partly to the force and running of its author, thanks partly to the admirable playing of Charles S. Gilpin in a title role so predominant that the play is little more than a dramatic monologue. His is an uncommonly powerful and imaginative performance, in several respects unsurpassed this season in New York. Mr. Gilpin is a Negro.

The Emperor Jones is a burly darky from the States who has broken jail there had escaped as a stowaway to what the program describes as "a West Indian island not yet self-determined by white marines." There, thanks a good deal to the American business philosophy he had picked up as a half-preoccupied porter listening wide-eyed in the smoking rooms of the Pullman cars back home, he is sufficiently bold, ingenious and unscrupulous to make himself ruler within two years. He has moved unharmed among his suilen subjects by virtue of a legend of his invention that only a silver bullet could harm him—this part of the play, at least, is not Mr. O'Neill's invention—but now, when he has squeezed from his domain just about all the wealth it will yield, he suspects it would be well for him to take flight. As the play begins, the measured sound of a beating tom-tom in the hills gives warning that the natives are in conclave there, using all manner of incantations to work up their courage to the point of rebellion.

The hour of Emperor Jones has come, and nightfall finds him already at the edge of the distant forest through whose trackless waste he knows a way to safety and freedom. He has food hidden there and, anyway, his revolver carries five bullets for his enemies and one of silver for himself in case he is ever really cornered.

It is a bold, self-reliant adventurer who strikes out into the jungle at sunset. It is a confused, broken, naked, half-crazed creature who, at dawn, stumbles blindly back to his starting place, only to find the natives calmly waiting there to shoot him down with bullets they have been piously molding according to his own prescription.

The forest has broken him. Full of strange sounds and shadows, it conjures up visions of his own and his ancestral past. These haunt him, and at each crisis of fear he fires wildly into the darkness and goes crashing on through the underbrush, losing his way, wasting all his defense, signaling his path, and waking a thousand sinister echoes to work still more upon his terrible fear.

It begins with the rattle of invisible dice in the darkness, and then, as in a little clearing, he suddenly sees the squatting darky he had slain back home in a gamblers' quarrel. He plunges on, but only to find himself once more strangely caught in the old chain gang, while the guard cracks that same whip whose stinging lash had goaded him to another murder. Then, as his fear quickens, the forest fills with old-fashioned people who stare at him and bid for him. They seem to be standing him on some sort of block. They examine his teeth, test his strength, flex his biceps. The scene yields only to the galley of a slave ship, and his own cries of terror take up the rhythmic lamentation of his people. Finally, it is a race memory of old Congo fears which drives him shrieking back through the forest to the very clearing whence he had started, and where now his death so complacently awaits him.

From first to last, through all the agonizing circle of his flight, he is followed by the dull beat, beat, beat of the tom-tom, ever nearer, ever faster, till it seems to be playing an ominous accompaniment to his mounting panic. The heightening effect of this device is much as you might imagine.

The Provincetown Players have squandercusly invested in cushions for their celebrated seats and a concrete dome to catch and dissolve their lights, so that even on their little stage they can now get such illusions of distance and the wide outdoors as few of their uptown rivals can achieve. But of immeasurably greater importance in their present enterprise, they have acquired an actor, one who has it in him to invoke the pity and the terror and the indescribable foreboding which are part of the secret of "The Emperor Jones."

CHAS. GILPIN

Famous Actor Again Triumphs in Big Production

The thousands of friends of Charley Gilpin, the well known actor, are bound to be pleased at the splendid success which the famous performer is having at the present time in New York, where he is a member—the principal member—of the cast in the drama, "The Emperor Jones," being the opening offering of the season of the Provincetown Players at their little theater on McDougal street, Gotham. The press reports are all "Gilpin," and the credit given Charley is of the sort that makes the world sit up and look when the critics involved are concerned.

After reviewing the play at length, Heywood Broun, purveyer for one of the biggest of the New York dailies, the writer gets personal thusly:

"The Emperor Jones" so unusual in its technique that it might wait in vain for a production anywhere except in so adventurous a playhouse as the Provincetown theater. As a matter of fact the setting of the play on the little stage is fine and imaginative and the lighting effects uncommonly beautiful. There is nothing for complaint but the delays. Also, if "The Emperor Jones" were taken elsewhere we have little doubt that the management would engage a white man with a piece of burnt cork to play Brutus Jones. They have done better in McDougal street. The Emperor is played by a Negro actor named Charles S. Gilpin, who gives the most thrilling performance we have seen any place this season. He sustains the succession of scenes in monologue not only because his voice is one of a gorgeous natural quality, but because he knows just what to do with it. All the notes are there and he has also an extraordinary facility for being in the right place at the right time. Generally he seems fairly painted into the scenic design. One performance is not enough to entitle a player to the word great, even from a not too careful critic, but there can be no question whatever that in "The Emperor Jones" Gilpin is great. It is a performance of heroic stature. It is so good that the fact that it is enormously skillful seems only incidental."

We in the middle west can "almost" call Charley Gilpin a home product,

Charley Gilpin

for, despite the fact that he was born in Richmond, Va., several years ago, didn't he gain his first real fame as a member of the original Pekin stock company? He was a member of that famous group when the first drama ever produced by our people turned the scoffers into "drama fans" long before the original Lincoln or Lafayette Players were thought of. May his cu of popularity overflow."

BROOKLYN N. Y. CITIZEN
DECEMBER 29. 1920

"THE EMPEROR JONES."

Charles G. Gilpin Seen to Excellent Advantage.

"The Emperor Jones," Eugene G. O'Neill's play, that was at the Provincetown Playhouse, moved to the Selwyn Theatre Monday for a series of matinees.

Charles L. Gilpin, the negro actor, found the enlarged quarters much to his liking and his excellent work was seen for greater advantage.

With the greater space comes greater reality through the proper staging of the scenes notably the jungle, where a decided atmosphere was attained.

As the pompous and bashful emperor of a little West Indian island, defying everything, to the hunted fear-stricken thing fleeing from his own people, who have revolted, Mr. Gilpin gives an exhibition of acting that thrills and holds his audience.

"Tickless Time," a one-act comedy, by Susan Glaspell and George Cram Cook, dealing with a sun-dial invented by a young man to give the world truthful time, was also given.

N. Y. C. GLOBE
NOVEMBER 12, 1920

Stage and Screen.

Gilpin Meets Belated Triumph in "The Emperor Jones."

By ALISON. SMITH.

These are the short and simple annals of Charles S. Gilpin, Negro actor and stage director, now triumphantly identified as "The Emperor Jones." He is the central figure of that haunting play by Eugene G. O'Neill which opened the Provincetown Players' season, and which is crowding their little theatre on Macdougal street far beyond its narrow limits. In his study of gradual fear, mounting by imperceptible degrees to startling panic, he gives an incredibly powerful performance—"the most thrilling," according to the carols of even the cautious critics, "of any seen on the stage this season."

Gilpin was born in Richmond, Va. forty-five years ago, a discovery which is the first surprise for an interviewer, since he looks ten years younger. Aside from the characteristic racial talent for music and mimicry, he had obviously a definite feeling for the stage, which was something deeper. From the first, he says, he wanted to do real acting—"not the comical kind." This disposition, however, did not prevent him from taking part in the strolling Negro minstrel shows, which band and disband with such blithe informality. In the intervals he "worked at most everything"—on the railroads, in a printing office, and at odd jobs about gardens and farms. Like the Brutus Jones created by Eugene O'Neill, he was once a Pullman porter. But his determination to do real acting had its first expression in the establishing of the "Pekin Players" in Chicago, a Negro stock company hitherto devoted to vaudeville. "The people came down to laugh at us," says Mr. Gilpin of this venture, "but when we gave them sure enough drama they didn't laugh. They liked it better than when we were just naturally acting funny."

In much the same way he says he changed the character of the Lafayette Players, that excellent Negro stock company of Harlem. It was here that Lester Lonergan found him for William Harris when the cast of "Abraham Lincoln" was being assembled. He played the old slave who comes to thank his emancipator with a sincerity which was as simple as it was genuine.

But he has found "real" acting of his earlier dreams amid the beating tom-toms and shadows and "little nameless fears" of O'Neill's eerie play. The history of his arrival is a tale of uncommon courage and persistence.

"But then you 'ad all the luck," says the cockney trader to the Emperor Jones.

"Luck! What you call luck? I has my brains and I uses them. Dat ain't luck," retorts his majesty.

It is the spirit of Charles Gilpin as well as Brutus Jones that gives the line its absolute conviction.

ROANOKE VA TIMES
JANUARY 11, 1920

GREAT NEGRO ACTOR COMING TO ROANOKE

Clarence Brooks, Star Screen Artist in "A Man's Duty," the Lincoln Motion Picture Company's First Production With All Colored Players Will Appear in Person With Picture at Hampton Theater Tuesday, January 13.

Through the enterprise of C. Tiffany Toliver, of the Hampton Theater, a rare treat is in store for the colored "movie" patrons on Tuesday, January 13, when "A Man's Duty" will be presented, matinees at 2:30 and 4:30 p. m. and again at night, this being the first picture produced by the Lincoln Motion Picture Company of Los Angeles, Cal., with an entire cast of colored actors.

Of equal or greater interest than the picture will be the presence of Clarence Brooks, the star in "A Man's Duty." The Hampton Theater management is to be congratulated on its enterprise in securing this double attraction for colored theater-goers. It will be a rare treat for the colored people of Roanoke to see and meet the great colored actor, who is touring the United States, appearing simultaneously with the picture in all the larger cities of the country, including New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington and Baltimore.

The picture and Actor Brooks met with record-breaking attendance in all the larger Eastern cities, including Norfolk, where exhibitions were given during the week.

This screen production in which Clarence Brooks stars with the able assistance of the usual corps of Lincoln players is full of action and love interest from start to finish, with a couple of rough and tumble flights thrown in for good measure.

The two afternoon matinees have been arranged in order that the colored people of the city generally will have an opportunity to attend. It is

understood that a number of leading colored citizens of the city are preparing to give the famous colored actor a rousing reception on his appearance here. Starting from this point he expects to swing around the Southern section of the country and return to the studio at Los Angeles, and he may never be able to again visit this section of the United States. After the showing of the picture on Tuesday night Actor Brooks will be entertained by the Leal Club.

FRANK IN SOUTH

Episode No. 1

I was playing Baltimore, Md., when I got a phone call from John T. Gibson, asking me how I would like to play South over the Southern Consolidated" circuit, so I said I didn't know, as I had never played south. So he said, "Go ahead, Frank, and take it, and if you are not treated right, just wire me and come on back home at my expense." So I accepted the time.

The very next day I got a wire from E. L. Cummings that my company opened at the Lafayette theater, Winston-Salem, N. C., at the figure that I told Gibson I would play for, with 11 more weeks to follow, two weeks in each town. Next day I received contracts for 12 weeks.

Next day came a wire, saying that there was some money at the Western Union telegraph office for me, so took a trip over to the office for the money. They asked me who I was expecting money from. I told them I thought it was from Winston-Salem, so they said, "That's right; now, how much are you expecting?" I told them about $150, as I had 15 people and the railroad fare was about $10. So they said, "Well, what is the manager's name in Winston-Salem?" I told them W. S. Scales." So they said, "Well, he has sent you $500."

So I accepted the money and the next day received a letter from W. S. Scales, reading: "I have received your photos. Inclosed find a check for $100 more, as I didn't send you enough by wire and I thought that you could use a few more dollars." Well, we arrived in Winston-Salem Sunday evening about 7 o'clock and Mr. Scales met us at the station and took us to places to stay and asked me if I needed any more money. I thanked him and said I did not.

Well, we played there two weeks, and, believe me, they were two pleasant weeks. On Saturday of the first week he sent envelopes back with extra money for every one of my people and the next week he gave me money to buy lunch for every one of them. Now, could a man be treated any better? Mr. Scales is the richest Colored man in Winston-Salem. He is almost a millionaire, and, believe me, he is a prince. I would be willing to play for him at any time.

The next place we played was Greenville, S. C., for two weeks.

My next jump was here to Atlanta, Ga., Bailey's 81 theater. Well, we came here and opened up on Monday, Sept .27, and everybody except a few had knocked me to Mr. Bailey, and everybody except a few had knocked Mr. Bailey to me. The fellow that boosted Mr. Bailey to me the most was Emmet Anthony, with Irving Miller. He said, "Frank, go there and you will find Mr. Bailey a fine man."

Well, after we opened I didn't see Mr. Bailey until Tuesday morning, while I was over to the theater to get my mail. He said: "Frank, you have a crackerjack show. And I want you to make this theater one of your homes. When you leave here, if anybody does anything to you just wire me and I will send for you to come back if you are in China, as you can always play my theater." Well, I didn't see Mr. Bailey any more until last night. He sent for me to come out front. So when I got up to his cozy office he gave me a three stone diamond and ruby ring and said: "Frank, this don't amount to much, but it is a little something in appreciation of your work here. I didn't know wha size you wore, but I see now it i too large, so you wear it tonight an tomorrow I will have the jeweler cu it down for you."

Now, just think of a manager giving you a diamond ring. And some managers hardly want to pay you your salary. Well, I've found Mr. Bailey a prince, and any performer who wants to work and get treated fine should come south and work for Bailey or Scales. This is my first time south and I am agreeably surprised.

Now, don't think tnat I have forgotten my northern managers—I mean the good ones. And here are a few of the best fellows that ever walked in shoe leather: W. A. Johnston, Chicago; John T. Gibson, Philadelphia, and W. C. Brown, Philadelphia. These are the men who helped me when I was losing so much money at the latter end of the season with my big show last year. Between Mr. Johnston, Mr. Gibson and Brown they loaned me around $6,000. I've found out that I have lots of friends among the managers. Will write more in Episode No. 2.

FRANK MONTGOMERY

"Symbol of the Unconquered" Title of New Picture at the Lafayette

Activities of the Ku Klux Klan Vividly Portrayed With Walker Thompson and Other Performers

The viciousness and un-Americanism of the Ku-Klux Klan, which is beginning to manifest itself in certain sections of the United States, will be vividly exposed at the Lafayette Theatre commencing Monday, Dec. 27th, when Oscar Micheaux's latest and greatest photoplay, "Symbol of the Unconquered," will be presented during the entire week. This picture, which is receiving its first exclusive showing in New York, is in eight reels, and is regarded as most timely, in view of the present attempt to organize night riders in this country for the express purpose of holding back the advancement of the Negro.

One of the thrilling scenes in this photo play is the rescue of a young Colored man by a Colored girl from the Ku-Klux-Klan.

On the screen will e seen such favorites as Iris Hall, Walker Thompson, Lawrence Chenault, Leigh Whipper, Jim Burris, E. B. Tatum and others.

In connection with the presentation of "Symbol of the Unconquered," a special musical program will be rendered which will be featured by the Exposition Four, a quartet which is making a most favorable reputation over the big-time vaudeville circuits.

HOW NEGRO ACTOR GOT HIS CHANCE IN EMPEROR JONES.

Until the Provincetown Players decided to produce Eugene O'Neill's "The Emperor Jones" with a Negro actor, Charles S. Gilpin, in the title role, the Negro had little or no opportunity to prove that he had dramatic possibilities and that he was more than a gifted song and dance entertainer. But the thoroughly moving performance which Gilpin has given at their theater down in Macdougal Street has justified the belief of the Provincetown Players that the Negro had dramatic possibilities and also led to insistent queries concerning Gilpin himself and his training for the stage. No man who has not had a wide schooling in the theater could play a role which requires as much as does "The Emperor Jones," and Gilpin has had that schooling interspersed with efforts to earn a living at whatever offered when acting did not prove a financial success.

'It wasn't all velvet,' said Gilpin in the clubroom above the ground floor theater. My own people thought my stuff was too 'highbrow' and when white people wanted an actor they hired a white man. Yes, it was an uphill fight, but I had the stuff and when th eopportunity came I was able to take advantage of it."

Gilpin was born in Richmond, Va. and attended a Roman Catholic school where one of the sisters became interested in his development and gave him instruction in elocution. He showed indications of dramatic and musical ability as a young ster but there was no opportunity for him to continue his work after he left school so he became a printer on The Richmond Planet. From Richmond he went to Philadelphia. His first situation in the city of Penn. was a job in a printing office. Then he took charge of the printing office of a little Negro newspaper called The Standard Echo.

From the time he left school, although he was working as a printer Gilpin thought of little but acting, some day to do real work on the stage. He danced and sang at entertainments played in vaudeville and took part in strolling ministrel shows which would disband without much formality. When there was nothing to do on the stage, he went back to his trade as a printer. On account of his color he was never able to make a living wage on the stage and he was depressed and discouraged. He left the printing business and became a barber's porter, which paid more money. He also worker as a railroad porter taking part in variety shows at every opportunity.

In the late '90s Gilpin joined the Perkus and Davis Great Southern Minstrel Barnstorming Agreegation, but when he discovered that there was no intention of paying any one after the first big night's business he returned to Philadelphia and decided to retire from the show business.

But although I had never had any irresistible urge for the stage. I felt myself going back to it and I never wandered a hundred miles out of Philadelphia because of opportunities to play at entertainments in churches and music halls. In 1913 I joined the Canadian Jubilee Singers of Hamilton Ont., and with them I had one of the pleasantes experiences of my life. Int 1905 I played with the Williams and Walker Company. We had twelve long weeks of rehersal in New York and then the show failed to go out. It finally got out in the spring and we played the biggest three weeks that had ever been played at Hammerstein's Victoria.

I had my first real opportunity with the Peking Players in Chicago. We gave everything, from vaudeville to grand opera with real African atmosphere. The Peking Players consisted of a company of about thirty-five or forty. Eleven of the company (I was among them.) were selected for dramatic productions, which were given on alternate Friday afternoons. That is how I got my experience of real acting. Everything was attempted, from serious drama to farce, and I had a chance to develop. After the death of Robert Mott, manager of the Peking Players and the pioneer of Negro players, I went back to vaudeville, touring the South.

During the war Gilpin worked as a Pullman porter. He seemed unable to Pullman porter. He seemed unable to attract the attention of any of the New York managers and played occasionally in New Jersey and elsewhere. His last stage appearance before coming to the Provincetown Players was in Drinkwater's 'Abraham Lincoln," in which he was the faithful slave.

Gilpin does not expect to get through with 'The Emperor Jones' for a long time. The Provincetown Players are making arrangements for the continuance of his performances at special matinees at an uptown theater and then Gilpin hopes to take the play on tour.

I take my characters out of the street and study them, Gilpin says, and I have seen 'The Emperor Jones. I have watched his braggadocio and I have seen him delirious with fear. I play him as he really is, in life, with very little exaggeration.

N Y C MOVING PICTURE WORLD
MAY 29, 1920

Up-to-Date Colored House Is Planned for Richmond

CHARLES A. SOMMA, who owns and manages the Hippodrome and other smaller houses in Richmond, Va., has completed arrangements for the erection of a new vaudeville and picture theatre which it is promised, when completed, will be the finest and most up-to-date house for colored people in the United States.

The location at Third and Clay streets is an ideal one. The plans, which are being prepared by Zink and Sparklin, theatre specialists of Washington, D. C., provide for a modern one balcony house with mezzanine for offices, toilets, rest and smoking rooms.

The main facade will be of Pompeian design and the same treatment will be carried throughout the interior. Seating capacity, including proscenium and mezzanine boxes, will be 2,500.

The theatre will be fireproof and many modern novel features will be installed. The ventilating and heating will be up to the minute and the lighting effects will compare favorably with the modern houses of other large cities.

Mr. Somma just recently made extensive improvements to his Hippodrome Theatre

N. Y. C. TELEGRAPH
DECEMBER 29, 1920

NEGRO OPERA CO. GRANTED CHARTER

Five Concerns Are Incorporated to Promote Motion Picture and Theatrical Business.

(Special Dispatch to The Morning Telegraph.)

ALBANY, N. Y., Dec. 28.

The Negro Grand Opera Company of New York City has been incorporated with the Secretary of State. The corporation is capitalized at $50,000 and has been organized for the purpose of providing for the production of grand operas, operattas, musical comedies and motion picture offerings. The directors are H. Lawrence Freeman, Valdo L. Freeman and Carlotta L. Freeman.

Other new amusement enterprises granted charters by he State this week include the following:

Fortuna Films, Inc., of New York City. To produce and exploit motion picture and photo-play films. Capital, $50,000.

Dominant Pictures of New York City. All branches of the motion picture business. Capital, $25,000.

G-M Laboratories of New York City. To manufacture and generally deal in motion picture films. Capital, $25,000.

Empire Film Laboratories of New York City. To produce screen films of all kinds. Capital, $30,000.

Buck Eye Producing Company of New York City. Proprietors and managers of theatrical enterprises. Capital, $1,000.

The Olympic Amusement Company of Buffalo, N. Y., has increased its capital stock from $675,000 to $750,000.